

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**NATION BUILDING IN AFGHANISTAN - A DISCONNECT BETWEEN SECURITY MEANS AND  
POLITICAL ENDS?**

by

Lieutenant Colonel Timothy J. Edens  
USA

Doctor Stephen Biddle  
Project Advisor

The views expressed in this academic research paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, or any of its agencies.

U.S. Army War College  
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

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## ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Timothy J. Edens

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This paper will attempt to answer the following question: Given the mixed record of success and failure of past nation building endeavors, has the UN and the International Community learned to assess and plan for peacekeeping forces needed for successful nation building in a tribally and ethnically fractured country with no sense nor history of "nationality"? And if not, how - what policies would be most effective to this end?



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## NATION BUILDING IN AFGHANISTAN - A DISCONNECT BETWEEN SECURITY MEANS AND POLITICAL ENDS?

### NATION-BUILDING THEN AND NOW

Our policy is directed not against any country or doctrine but against hunger, poverty, desperation and chaos. Its purpose should be the revival of a working economy in the world so as to permit the emergence of political and social conditions in which free institutions can exist.<sup>1</sup>

— George C. Marshall

With those words, Secretary of State George C. Marshall galvanized our nation behind a plan for the political and economic recovery of Western Europe, to include our former enemy – Germany. What has come to be termed Peace Operations (POs), have, over the last half-century, evolved into the most complex, challenging and as we learned in Somalia in 1993, sometimes costly endeavors pursued under the mantle of national interests. As of January 2003, the UN has officially recorded 55 peace operations since 1948 and of these thirteen are currently ongoing.<sup>2</sup> They have become increasingly more complex and often demand solutions that do not fit the peace keeping model that had developed from the Marshall Plan and been applied to conflicts until the 1990's. Known as Chapter VI Operations, these type POs are executed under UN mandate in accordance with strict Rules of Engagement (ROE). They relied on consent from all parties to a conflict. “Chapter VI addresses peaceful means of establishing or maintaining peace through conciliation, mediation, adjudication and diplomacy.” Operations under this chapter are now referred to as traditional or classic peacekeeping and are designed to monitor and facilitate implementation of agreements and support diplomatic efforts to reach long-term political settlements.<sup>3</sup>

In the 1990s, however, experiences from Somalia to Kosovo suggested that Chapter VI peacekeeping generally did not work in environments where consent by all parties was not guaranteed. “John Mackinlay was among the first to argue that the concepts and doctrine which defined classic peacekeeping were no longer adequate to cope with the demands on peacekeepers in the civil wars into which they were drawn in the 1990s.”<sup>4</sup> Operations became largely Article VII, Peace Enforcement Operations. These operations, also called expanded peace keeping, are normally mandated by the UN in situations where extraordinary humanitarian suffering outweighs the need for consent from parties to a conflict. Although still conducted under UN mandate, ROE is more relaxed and the forces conducting the operations



are usually better equipped to conduct combat operations if required. Often one side or more to the conflict has not consented to peace accords so combat is more likely to occur. This demands more robust military force. To meet these demands, the UN often relies on regional alliances or coalitions like NATO to provide forces. Due to the complex nature of civil wars, an end state is often difficult to determine and achieve.<sup>5</sup> The Balkans, where we still have soldiers today is as an example of this type peace operation.

Nation-building held such a negative connotation that during the Bush vs Gore presidential debates, it "... became a no-go area in foreign policy, with both candidates swearing to stay out of that minefield."<sup>6</sup> When the facts of the Somalia intervention are reviewed, some of the criticism of the UN proves ill founded. The widely held view that the UN hampered these forces with insufficient force and Rules of Engagement (ROE) restrictions under Chapter VI (Peace-keeping) of the UN Charter is simply not true. Both the United States led United Task Force (UNITAF) and the United Nations Operations in Somalia (UNOSOM) II force that followed were authorized under a Chapter VII (Peace Enforcement) mandate. The restriction to ROE to Chapter VI was a decision made by the Bush administration.<sup>7</sup> Walter Clarke and Jeffrey Herbst attribute this to our "misunderstanding what is implied by humanitarian intervention." Although we knew that the warlords were diverting the food aid, we failed to realize that by intervening we would also place ourselves in the middle of Somali politics.<sup>8</sup> Regardless of where the fault lies, US reluctance to commit forces to POs is greatly influenced by our experiences in the 1990s.

Despite President George W. Bush's campaign position to reduce America's involvement in peace operations, the reality in Afghanistan is that while combat operations were ongoing nation building was in full swing. After the defeat of the Taliban, those efforts have continued under the auspices of the UN. We provide assistance either directly to the Afghan Government through United States Agency for International Development (USAID) or to the UN.<sup>9</sup> U.S. Military forces hunting down the Taliban indirectly provide security to some areas of the population and are training the Afghan Army and police forces.<sup>10</sup> The UN and the Transitional Afghan Government under Hamid Karzai struggle to put Afghanistan back together while the debate over involving ourselves beyond financial and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) assistance in these complex conflicts rages on here in the United States. On one side are those that feel the only successful peacekeeping operations were those that fit neatly into the traditional model, and feel we should enter only into situations that conform. On the other are those that argue for even more intervention because the world can no longer ignore failed or failing states.

Accepting that this debate is important, the fact that peace operations are under way in Afghanistan makes it irrelevant to what the outcome of those efforts will be. I want to set the argument aside and focus on what is being done in the country to accomplish what Secretary of State Powell stated as our goal before the Afghan donors conference in Tokyo on 21 January 2001. "Our shared goal is to help the Afghan people rebuild a politically stable, economically viable, secure Afghanistan. An Afghanistan where terrorism and traffickers can never again flourish, an Afghanistan to which refugees will want to return, an Afghanistan whose sons and daughters can contribute fully to the life of their nation and to the world." <sup>11</sup>

All evidence shows Afghanistan is a failed state. The country entered into a devastating civil war following the Soviet withdrawal in 1989. At that time, what happened there did not impact our national interests and although our goals may have been peace and stability, our means to achieving those goals had been "...pursued with varying degrees of intensity." <sup>12</sup> A policy of non-interference in civil wars has proven, in the case of Afghanistan, to be short sighted. Now, 13 years later, due to Taliban support to al Qaeda terrorists, we sent forces into Afghanistan to destroy the terrorists and remove the Taliban government. This reflects a very relevant danger that failed states pose to our security interests. Dr. Robin Dorff states "the fundamental problem of failed states is that they do not simply go away, they linger; the longer they persist, the greater the potential challenges to neighboring states, regional stability and international peace." <sup>13</sup> So, as we now see, we must do something. But what does it take to build a nation in Afghanistan?

In his work, Afghanistan's Endless War, Larry Goodson states that, "At least three changes must occur for reintegration of the society and reconstruction of a functioning state to begin. First, widespread ethnic-based fighting must cease. Second, a reasonably legitimate government must be established. Third, normality must return to Afghanistan." <sup>14</sup>

In light of no existing UN doctrine, I will refer to the concluding report from the Partner Organizations of the Challenges Project - a project with 50 participant countries and 230 international organizations began in 1997 for the purpose of determining how to "enhance the planning, conduct and effectiveness of multi-national peace operations" <sup>15</sup> In this document, the authors wrote, "Success is drawn from three levels: strategic, operational and tactical. Once the groundwork is laid at the strategic level, operational leaders can lay out goals and objectives to facilitate success. Well qualified individuals achieving the goals outlined by operational leaders will determine tactical-level success." <sup>16</sup> This work takes lessons from the Report to the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations or Brahimi Report, and provides an "analytical lens" through which to judge peace operations. Although there are many other constructs, like

principles of war, or fundamentals of military operations other than war, I felt it beneficial to attempt an analysis using a model proposed for multi-dimensional peace operations. I will focus at the strategic level because although soldiers' tactical decisions and actions may have strategic impact in complex peace operations, they are essentially set up for success or failure by the strategy determined long before they arrive on the ground.

Focusing on the area of stopping the wide-based ethnic fighting asserted by Goodson and the doctrine of the Brahimi report as interpreted and applied in the Challenges Project, this paper will assess whether the peacekeeping planning efforts by the UN and international community at the strategic level meet basic requirements and show any promise of setting the stage for the successful rebuilding of Afghanistan. To do this, I will answer the question: Does the strategy (approach), outlined in the Bonn Agreement and implemented by the United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA) through its mandates, address the requirement described by Goodson. To answer this question, I will review and assess documents and associated processes relating to the Bonn Agreement and the mandates for both UNAMA and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). I will also compare the efforts playing out in the country against previous cases to highlight planning deficiency or sufficiency. Ultimately, history alone will show success or failure of the efforts in Afghanistan. But just as we in the military consider lessons learned to be critical to successful operations in the future, I hope to show whether the international community, specifically the UN, has learned and applied lessons that might lead to nation-building success in Afghanistan. First, though, I want to provide some historical background to what has been going on in Afghanistan since 11 September 2001.

## **NATION-BUILDING IN AFGHANISTAN – HISTORY MAKES IT HARD**

Internecine conflict within failed or failing states often leads to the cessation of international peace-building efforts. Once the environment becomes hostile to the point Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) fear for their own safety and that of the people they are helping, as demonstrated in Somalia, and even in Afghanistan during its civil war, they in particular, and the international community in general will lose interest and reduce or completely abandon efforts in the country concerned.<sup>17</sup>

Over a year after the Taliban's fall, reports of unrest and even attacks against U.S forces and the Karzai government cause concern.

A U.S. military spokesman from the Bagram air base told media Nov. 25 that U.S. military bases in Afghanistan came under attack twice over the weekend. The first attack came early Nov. 23, when a 107 mm rocket was fired at a U.S. facility near Khost, damaging two trucks. The second came later that day when unknown assailants fired nine white phosphorus rockets at a base near Lwara, sparking several fires. On Nov. 24, a U.S. Special Forces base near Gardez came under small-arms fire.<sup>18</sup>

Added to this is the potential resurgence of Taliban and al Qaeda influence:

Afghan warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar says his militia has joined al Qaeda and the Taliban in efforts to expel foreign troops from Afghanistan. Hekmatyar announced the alliance in a statement distributed Dec. 25 in Pakistan by his followers, the Sydney Morning Herald reports. European intelligence sources have said his group bought vehicles that could be used for attacks in Afghanistan. U.S. authorities say they consider him to be a threat, although the size of his force is not known.<sup>19</sup>

Finally, to make matters worse, is continued outside interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs. Assistance to Afghan factions from regional states poses problems for Karzai's government in controlling the country.

Continued violence in Afghanistan will chase out European peacekeepers and force the United States to abandon many of its efforts to influence the political process as it focuses on pursuing al Qaeda fighters. However, other nations will retain an active hand. Those include Turkey and Uzbekistan – which will continue to aid warlord Abdul Rashid Dostum in carving out a fiefdom in the Uzbek-dominated northwest – and Russia, which backs Tajik factions that dominate the interim government.<sup>20</sup>

These conditions are not new to Afghanistan or the region. It is a country with a long history of fractionalization and tribal warfare. Being caught in the power struggles between foreign powers has further complicated this history. The volatile mix of outside intervention and internal fighting has been a factor in the development of the country's character and culture.

Unlike some mountainous lands, such as Peru, Nepal, and Norway – even at times Switzerland, its closest European counterpart – it has never been Afghanistan's lot to exist benignly apart from the rest of the world. It has instead found itself at the hinge of imperial ambitions since the beginning of recorded history, from the world's first transcontinental superpower, the Persian Empire, to its latest, the United States. In between enduring or resisting invasions from every point of the compass...the Afghans have honed their martial skills by

fighting among themselves, in terrain that facilitates divisions of power and resists the concept of centralized control.<sup>21 24 AFGHANISTAN p1.</sup>

Mr. Goodson emphasizes the importance of five “contextual features” that are necessary in order to understand the country’s “collapse and problematic future.” These features, or “centrifugal forces”, are first, “deep and multifaceted cleavages along primarily ethnic and linguistic lines, but also by sectarian, tribal and racial divides.” Second, is the simultaneous unification under Islam divided by “hundreds of variations on its practice.” Third, is a tribal social system that places loyalty to local authority above that to central authority. Fourth, is the rugged land itself, which serves to isolate people from each other and from their government. Finally, is Afghanistan’s own modern history that, as Mr. Goodson claims is important, “...for the process of state-building has also provided a framework within which current politics must occur.”<sup>22</sup>

The influence of these forces is also fundamental to the recommended approach to nation-building in “Rebuilding Afghanistan: Fantasy versus Reality” by Marina Ottaway and Anatol Lieven. They explain that the interplay of all these factors first came together in 1901 to end the reign of King Abdur Rahman. Known as the Iron Amir, he reigned from 1880 to 1901. Provided money and weapons by Britain, he ruthlessly attempted the first state-building process in Afghan history. Comparing what happened in those 21 years of Afghan modern history to what transpired in Europe through the centuries of the Middle Ages, the authors state that it was “...hardly surprising that the very short Afghan state-building process met fierce resistance, had limited success, and ultimately collapsed – especially given the warlike, independent and anarchic traditions of many Afghan peoples...”<sup>23</sup> They further interpret that Rahman’s rule laid the foundations for the centralizing and modernizing Afghan state, but also for the alienation from the state of the religious, tribal, and ethnic groups that dominate Afghan society. This alienation helped bring about the failure of the Afghan constitutional monarchy in the 1960s and early 1970s and tore the country apart in the following decades.<sup>24</sup> Their policy brief concludes that the West’s approach should not be based on building a democratic state of Afghanistan, but rather, “...needs to be based on an awareness of Afghanistan’s past and present conditions, not on an image of what the West would like it to become.”<sup>25</sup>

Martha Brill Olcott proposes a different approach to the Afghanistan problem. In “Preventing New Afghanistans: A Regional Strategy for Reconstruction,” the modern history of Afghanistan is also central to forming her recommendations. She states that, “Throughout modern history, the peoples of Afghanistan have melded with those of its neighboring states, in part because the country’s principal ethnic groups were dispersed across national borders.”

She focuses on the “risks of spillover from Afghanistan” to weak countries in the region such as Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Pakistan and therefore concludes that a regional approach is the only way to achieve stability.<sup>26</sup>

Given this very unique history, and some views of its impact, Afghanistan poses many challenges to the international community in the attempt to rebuild its government and revitalize its economy. With the pre-disposition of its people away from central governmental authority, a distrust of foreign intervention born from centuries of outside meddling, along with a tremendous potential for regional expansion of the “infection” in Afghanistan to its neighbors and the “warlord” issue, it is easy to see that the transitional administration faces significant, fundamental and deeply rooted obstacles. UNAMA, led by Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi as the Special Representative to the Secretary-General, is now into its second year of multinational, multi-disciplinary operations. Mr. Brahimi, has determined the way ahead for assisting the Afghans rebuild their country and is orchestrating the international effort there.

## **STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT**

Strategic measures of success, according to the Challenges Project, "...include the thorough assessment of a potential mission; the creation of a clear, credible and achievable mandate that matches the mission with the resources; selection of quality leaders to conduct the mission; and an adequate donor base."<sup>27</sup> For the purposes of this paper, I will discuss the first two areas and the last area. Without a personal history and a UN performance appraisal of Mr. Brahimi, judging whether he is a quality leader or not would be purely subjective if not impossible. I also don't feel that the answer would be particularly important to the purpose of this paper. Leaders are important, but if the strategy is flawed even great leaders will often not make the difference.

## **THOROUGH ASSESSMENT OF A POTENTIAL MISSION**

"In December 1993, at the request of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General established the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan (UNSMA) to canvass a broad spectrum of Afghan leaders and solicit their views on how the UN could best help with national reconciliation and reconstruction."<sup>28</sup> Thus began the UN effort to determine what it would take to rebuild the country. The Secretary-General's Special Representatives developed a certain approach through several years of meetings and visits to both Afghanistan and the region. That approach which has been labeled the "light footprint approach," is what Mr. Brahimi used to

broker the Bonn agreements. This approach uses as its first guiding principle the building of Afghan official and non-governmental capacity with reliance on "...as limited an international presence and as many Afghan staff as possible."<sup>29</sup> But how did the UN, actually arrive at this approach? I supposed, given all the praise for the Brahimi Report recommendations I had read during my research, that the Security Council, Member States and the Secretariat - all the key players at the Strategic level - applied the very lessons considered so vital to improving UN planning and performance in peace operations. Specifically, that they applied proposals that dealt with assessing requirements to meet both the peacebuilding and peacekeeping tasks inherent in complex peace operations. However, I can find little evidence that this was the case.

One can certainly argue that the UN, at least since UNSMA's establishment in Kabul, had probably assessed the requirements for peace operations in the country. Additionally, Mr. Brahimi, upon reassuming duties as the Special Representative in Oct 2000, clearly spent great time and effort visiting Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, as well as the despora - Afghans in the Bonn and Rome processes. He and UNSMA under the previous Special Representative to Afghanistan (and now Mr. Brahimi's Deputy), Mr. Francisc Vandrell also met with representatives of the "Six-Plus-Two" Group: China, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan plus the United States and Russia.<sup>30</sup> The purpose of all these meetings was to forge a way ahead to reconciliation and reconstruction of Afghanistan. It became apparent to Mr. Brahimi, as stated below, that all these meetings and processes needed to be focused towards these goals through a common vision.

Of course, Afghanistan's neighbours alone cannot help the Afghans achieve national reconciliation and rebuild their country. Here, the international community at large will need to make a massive commitment, politically and financially, to the long-term stability of Afghanistan. It is therefore necessary to strengthen other mechanisms for multi-lateral cooperation and coordination on Afghanistan. At this juncture, serious consideration should be given to ways to better utilize a rich pool of skilled Afghans in the planning and implementation of rehabilitation and reconstruction projects.

With respect to Afghanistan, the United Nations has over the years convened several groups of interested countries, in addition to the Six Plus Two, such as the G-21, which is comprised of a broader group of interested countries, who also have either influence or interests, or both, or who have been directly or indirectly affected by the Afghan crisis, and who could either directly or indirectly help contribute to its resolution. I share the view of those of its members who believe that this group should be reactivated and reinvigorated, and we have suggested that it reconvene on Friday. The United Nations also participates in

the Afghanistan Support Group, convened by donor countries, the Geneva Initiative, in support of peace efforts seeking to legitimate a transition through a Loya Jirga, and other initiatives. It is essential that all these groups -- and any other groups that Member States may wish to form on their own -- develop a common, constructive position with regard to Afghanistan's political future.<sup>31</sup>

Although this assessment indicates great effort and may even lead towards a common goal, it does not appear to match "how" assessments should be made as outlined in the Brahimi Report and explained in the Challenges Report. Both make it clear that the assessment be as thorough and specific as possible and not rely on best case planning or ad hoc execution (criticisms of past UN operations).

(a) The Panel recommends that, before the Security Council agrees to implement a ceasefire or peace agreement with a United Nations-led peacekeeping operation, the Council assure itself that the agreement meets threshold conditions, such as consistency with international human rights standards and practicability of specified tasks and timelines;

(b) The Security Council should leave in draft form resolutions authorizing missions with sizeable troop levels until such time as the Secretary-General has firm commitments of troops and other critical mission support elements, A/55/305 S/2000/809 including peace-building elements, from Member States;

(c) Security Council resolutions should meet the requirements of peacekeeping operations when they deploy into potentially dangerous situations, especially the need for a clear chain of command and unity of effort;...

Moreover, the Panel believes that until the Secretary-General is able to obtain solid commitments from Member States for the forces that he or she does believe necessary to carry out an operation, it should not go forward at all. To deploy a partial force incapable of solidifying a fragile peace would first raise and then dash the hopes of a population engulfed in conflict or recovering from war, and damage the credibility of the United Nations as a whole<sup>32</sup>

To assist the Security Council in its responsibility to assure certain requirements are met, assessment teams are to be dispatched by the Secretary-General to the region. These teams, headed by a "senior civilian" - the position Mr. Brahimi clearly holds - are to:

...include military planners, logistical experts, civilian police, and humanitarian specialists...the composition will depend on the crisis. Their job is



to conduct a thorough and complete assessment of the situation and, if a mission is warranted, develop a concept for the initial phase. Other critical aspects of their assessment include determining the level of consent of the parties, conducting a 'troop-to-task' analysis of the mission (to help identify an appropriate size of the force), assessing the humanitarian needs of displaced persons or refugees, and determining the ability of the host country's or neighboring countries' economic and industrial base to support a peacekeeping force.<sup>33</sup>

Contrary to this methodical, focused approach, the actual assessment process, loosely reported by the Secretary-General in his 6 December 2001 report to the General Assembly, resembled a conglomeration of in place and widely disparate efforts: UNSMA - focused on humanitarian assistance; bilateral and multi-lateral meetings dealing with the future Afghan government held in Bonn, Paris and Japan attended by special representatives and virtually every kind of representative of all the Afghan factions; and other meetings between nations bordering Afghanistan and nations with interests in the region discussing the need for regional stability. In fact, Secretary-General Anan in the report's observations and recommendations sounds more like the assessment has just started at Bonn vs its results being reflected in the agreement, and therefore providing sound planning basis upon which the Security Council can act.

The challenge that faces us now is to speed up the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the Afghans, to help chart a path that will lead to a stable and unified Afghanistan and rebuild a country shattered by over two decades of war. With this in mind I decided to ask Mr. Brahimi to serve as my Special Representative with overall responsibility for the political, humanitarian and reconstruction aspects of the United Nations efforts in Afghanistan. I am very encouraged by the international community's support for the intensified efforts of the United Nations in Afghanistan. Mr. Brahimi and his team will make every effort to help the Afghan parties to build bridges towards a brighter and sustainable future, with a broad-based and fully representative government that will be at peace internally and with its neighbours. The talks with representatives of the Afghan parties in Bonn that started on 27 November are a first step in this direction. As I have stated on several occasions during the past weeks, any solution to the Afghan crisis must be "home-grown". The international community cannot impose a settlement on the Afghan people. I am confident that the Afghan parties will reach an acceptable and legitimate settlement if they approach the difficult path ahead with a constructive spirit and a genuine willingness to compromise for the greater good and well-being of all people living in and returning to Afghanistan. The United Nations stands ready to assist the people of Afghanistan in these endeavours.<sup>34</sup>

It should also be noted that this occurs after the Bonn Agreement is signed by the Afghan representatives, and only then is it apparent that the effort is to be consolidated under Mr. Brahimi. Actual requirements for resources, to include how large a peacekeeping force, were not even addressed in the Bonn Agreement itself, nor any specific assessments leading up to it. For example, the size of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was not determined by the needs for security in the country, but by the limits imposed by UN member nations and Afghan participants to the Bonn Meeting themselves.<sup>35</sup> This directly violates the recommendation stated above that the mission not even go forward for Security Council resolution without sufficient force identified and promised by member states in the Brahimi Report. The efforts in Afghanistan, clearly laid out in the Bonn Agreement, would be very broad, encompassing emergency humanitarian assistance and nation building functions like establishing legal institutions, police, and at least the rudimentary services governments provide such as school and road building. As would be determined later, after being on the ground in Kabul, the lack of sufficient security to meet the needs of a mandate of this scope will become an issue.

More importantly, the impetus on speeding up both humanitarian assistance and development of the way ahead to reconstruction, seems to have had precedence over thoroughness of the assessment. This need to accelerate the establishment of the interim administration was possibly due to the un-forecasted speed of U.S. military success in defeating the Taliban. The removal of that regime could leave a power vacuum into which the powerful warlords could step, unless Mr. Brahimi could get the interim administration into Kabul first. That may well have been the case, but it is my contention, that this preoccupation with getting into Kabul quickly, will have strategic and operational consequences both in the actual agreement as well as the way it plays out on the ground in Afghanistan.

From 28 November to 5 December of 2001, representatives from Afghanistan met in Bonn, Germany with assistance from the UN for the purpose of drafting up the initial agreement for starting the nation building process in Afghanistan. Those participants were described by Mr. Brahimi as four “processes”.

...the Northern Alliance, which is composed of several parties or organizations that have been united in facing or in fighting the Taliban. The Rome process has been built around the King. The Peshawar group is the result of a convention that has taken place in Peshawar a few weeks ago. And the

Cyprus group is a group of people from both refugees inside Afghanistan and the diaspora who have also been trying to work on a solution.<sup>36</sup>

The meeting was hailed as a historic first where representatives of all major factions (processes) in or deposed from Afghanistan, not rulers or strong tribal chieftains - met and agreed to begin the process of building a nation. Bonn was reported by some to be very unlike Bosnia or Kosovo since the UN did not bring together warring parties to make peace. Instead Bonn "...brought together Afghan groups opposed to the Taliban and al Qaeda...They set themselves the central task of protecting human security: starting the process of establishing – or as the Afghans insisted, in recognition of their long history, re-establishing – permanent government institutions."<sup>37</sup> Although this sounds encouraging, others argue that the representatives were nothing more than puppets who answered to the real power-brokers - the United States, India, and Pakistan to name but a few. For example, Kenneth Katzmann notes the impact of Pakistani interests on a key part of the Bonn process - selection of the Interim Administration's Chairman:

At the same time, Pakistan has sought to protect its interests by fashioning a strong Pashtun-based component for a post-Taliban government. Pakistan is wary that a post-Taliban government dominated by the Northern Alliance, which is backed by India, would amount to Indian encirclement of Pakistan. To counter that perceived threat, Pakistan was instrumental in ensuring that Northern Alliance leader Rabbani would not be chairman of the interim government. Pakistan also succeeded in building a role for the former King in selecting a permanent government, although the former King's role appears to be limited.<sup>38</sup>

Even the U.S. had interests in the outcomes of the meeting. Specifically, we were lobbying heavily for Karzai to be selected as the Chairman of the Interim Administration.<sup>39</sup>

Still others felt that the representation at the Bonn meetings was not fairly distributed among the various factions. This was noted by one of the "lesser" participants in the meetings, Pir Gailani, head of the 'Peshawar Group, "...Bonn was not equitable. Most of the portfolios have remained with the Rabbani government's representatives, who stayed in power. But after the Loya Jirga, we hope that a better government will be formed that better reflects the people's will."<sup>40</sup> These doubts can be downplayed as normal to the give and take of compromise. It can even be argued that compromise itself - consensus among Afghans, can be seen optimistically as starting the process towards reconciliation and moving ahead with nation building. In an interview prior to the Bonn meetings, this would certainly appear to be Brahimi's view:

We have convinced them [the four Afghan Processes] that they should get together and form one single process. In accordance with the ideas which I have

put in the document which I submitted to the Security Council, and again I stress that these were ideas that have been widely discussed by Afghans, we think that there is a real consensus amongst all Afghans that what you need is a large council, a small authority to run the country on a provisional basis that would end in a Loya Jirga to give legitimacy to the process, and start the process of preparing a new constitution that will be adopted by a second Loya Jirga. Now, because of the fast developing situation on the ground, what we are already suggesting, and indeed what participants also are, I think, telling us, is that let's try and go straight to the small authority that is going to run, that is going to Kabul and be the provisional authority - the provisional administration of Afghanistan. And then go to the other steps - the council, the Loya Jirga, etc <sup>39</sup> [www.un.org/News/dh/latest/afghan/brahimi20nov01.htm](http://www.un.org/News/dh/latest/afghan/brahimi20nov01.htm)

Under scrutiny, however, one must ask whether or not these issues might create some strategic flaws in the agreement itself, as well as the assistance plan that would follow. The fact that Afghans themselves insisted on many of the terms of the agreement in order to insure ownership of the problem was key to the process according to Brahimi. <sup>45</sup> Interview w/Brahimi internet. Although this certainly shows cultural awareness of Afghan distrust of foreign intervention, it does not necessarily mean all parties to the agreement have bought into the process, let alone the resultant solution. Buy-in is important to resolution of conflict and eventual success of peace operations. As noted by Roderick von Lispey:

Resolution requires a considerable degree of participation from all parties to the conflict as well as the good offices of a neutral body that seeks to facilitate their transition from a state of conflict to a state of peace.

The conditions for such participation include a degree of enfranchisement, buying into the process, by those who seek redress of wrongs or the address of particular grievances formed the basis of the original conflict. Although resolution begins with the peacemaking process - and usually culminates with the pomp and circumstance of a treaty-signing ceremony - it is not complete until the parties fully commit to the process of peacefully resolving their disputes. <sup>46</sup> Breaking the Cycle, p. 18.

As will be demonstrated in the next section, buy-in by powerful Afghans was not then and is not yet achieved. The nature of Afghan politics and warlord culture continues to play havoc with the long-term goals of the newly formed Afghan administration and its UN assistant UNAMA.

## CREDIBLE AND ACHIEVABLE MANDATE

As a political body, the Security Council focuses on consensus-building, even though it can take decisions with less than unanimity. But the compromises required to build consensus can be made at the expense of specificity, and the resulting ambiguity can have serious consequences in the field if the mandate is then subject to varying interpretation by different elements of a peace operation,

or if local actors perceive a less than complete Council commitment to peace implementation that offers encouragement to spoilers. Ambiguity may also paper over differences that emerge later, under pressure of a crisis, to prevent urgent Council action. While it acknowledges the utility of political compromise in many cases, the Panel comes down in this case on the side of clarity, especially for operations that will deploy into dangerous circumstances. Rather than send an operation into danger with unclear instructions, the Panel urges that the Council refrain from mandating such a mission.<sup>41</sup>

The participants signed the Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan Pending the Re-Establishment of Permanent Government Institutions on 5 December 2001. With unprecedented speed, the Security Council endorsed the agreement in SC Resolution 1383 the very next day on 6 December. As has already been demonstrated, the UN does not appear to be following the Brahimi Report's recipe for changing what is, in the Secretary-General's view "...essential to make the United Nations truly credible as a force for peace."<sup>42</sup> The rush to endorse the Bonn Agreement appears to also ignore the panel's warning that the Security Council not bless a potential mission without assuring itself of the practicability of the "specified tasks and timelines."

At the time of the Security Council's approving of the agreement they that the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan was desperate, Mr. Brahimi and the Secretary-General were concerned that an interim government be quickly established and the Afghans had requested Security Council consideration of an ISAF.

Conscious that some time may be required for the new Afghan security and armed forces to be fully constituted and functioning, the participants in the UN Talks on Afghanistan request the United Nations Security Council to consider authorizing the early deployment to Afghanistan of a United Nations mandated force. This force will assist in the maintenance of security for Kabul and its surrounding areas. Such a force could, as appropriate, be progressively expanded to other urban centres and other areas.<sup>43</sup>

The facts on the ground at that time clearly indicated that an ISAF should not only be considered but that it would be essential to the interim administration's survival and ability to execute its mandate. Even Mr. Brahimi noted in his 13 November address to the General Assembly, "The pervasive presence of non-Afghan armed and terrorist groups with no interest in a lasting peace will necessitate the introduction of a robust security force able to deter and, if necessary, defeat challenges to its authority."<sup>44</sup> This known requirement contrasted sharply with what the international community as well as certain Afghan factions were prepared to

support. Donor nations were not eager to establish a large peacekeeping force. The U.S. in particular, with forces already committed to hunting down al Qaeda and considering war in Iraq, was not supportive of a large peacekeeping force or expanded mandate and would not even consider contributing soldiers until these operations were completed.<sup>45</sup>

Even before the agreement was finalized by the Afghan participants, powerful Afghan leaders from the Northern Alliance were calling the agreement "symbolic rather than substantive." After the signing, General Abdurrashid Dostum an Uzbek, was highly critical of the agreement as well as the under-representation of the Uzbeks in the Interim Administration which he saw as over-representing Pashtuns.<sup>46</sup> Contrast that with another powerful warlord, Khan Zadran, an ethnic Pashtun, who protested that Karzai was a traitor to Pashtuns because the administration did not reflect the Pashtun majority in the country.<sup>47</sup> Since that time, things have apparently settled down and the Karzai administration has managed to quell some potentially violent unrest by awarding ministerial positions in return for participation and professed loyalty to the central government, while firing obstinate or incompetent officials like Jalalabad Mayor Abdul Ghafar; Kandahar's chief of intelligence, Kamaluddin Gulalai; and the chief of police in Logar province, Mohammad Tahir.<sup>48</sup> Still, one official, Vice President Abdul Qadir and a more recently a UN relief worker have been brutally murdered and Mr. Brahimi still insists that additional security forces and a broader mandate is needed to insure the fragile stability is maintained in Kabul and extended throughout Afghanistan to facilitate humanitarian relief and the goals of the Bonn Agreement.

While the real key to the restoration of security lay in the creation of a national army and police force, Mr. Brahimi urged that the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), currently operating only in Kabul and which has been instrumental in stabilizing the capital, be expanded to other parts of the country. Such an expansion would have an "enormous" impact on security, and could be achieved with relatively few troops, at relatively little cost, and with little danger.<sup>49</sup>

This demonstrates, that despite the obvious disconnect between what security would potentially be needed and what was both available and feasible, the Security Council endorsed the mission anyway. I would argue that ultimately the UN believed that Security Council endorsement lent legitimacy to the fledgling administration proposed in the Bonn Agreement. This may have given a veil of de jure legitimacy to the government in the eyes of the

international community, but it remains to be seen if UN backing has produced defacto legitimacy in the eyes of the Afghans themselves.

On 20 December, Security Council Resolution 1386 established ISAF under Chapter VII of the UN Charter.<sup>50</sup> The urgency of implementing an interim government over-rode the need for a sufficient security force. A military technical agreement was signed by Great Britain as initial lead nation and the Interim Administration on 6 January 2002. The agreement limited the multi-national force to only 4500 troops and limited their employment to Kabul.<sup>51</sup> Again, the influence of quickly getting an agreement and establishing the government appears to have been more important to Brahimi and the international community than also being able to protect that government and the ongoing humanitarian and nation-building efforts. Opposition to early insertion of a large force came mostly from Uzbek and Tajik militias (and their Russian benefactors) because this would obviously counter their power.<sup>52</sup> As mentioned, the U.S. too, objected to early intervention by peacekeepers, arguing that they "...might become targets or crimp U.S. freedom of action against Taliban and al Qaeda suspects."<sup>53</sup> It appears that, against a substantial amount of opposition, the UN acquiesced to a compromise that is proving less than adequate to the tasks at hand. For comparison, simply contrast this force with the size forces committed in previous POs: Bosnia - SFOR, with 23,000 troops or a country more comparable in size and population, Somalia - UNITAF, with 40,000 troops!.<sup>54</sup>

Although the ISAF is the only specifically requested task laid out in the Bonn Agreement. that demands military forces, the UN went into these operations knowing from previous experience that establishment of an Afghan National Army and civilian police forces would certainly be required. These two tasks have proven extremely problematic in places like Yugoslavia and East Timor. Once again, the fact that these tasks are not laid out in the agreement endorsed by the Security Council, demonstrates more the old way of doing business than trying to apply more rigid standards according to the Brahimi Report. Similar to previous operations, through a stream of resolutions, the UN gradually maps out its plan, instead of identifying the important tasks up front when establishing the mission. For police training, it was not until June 2002 that the Security Council passed a resolution that stated the following:

Reiterates its strong support for the Transitional Authority in the full implementation of the Bonn Agreement, including the establishment of a Constitutional Commission, and in strengthening the central government, building a national army and police force, implementing demobilization/reintegration activities and improving the security situation throughout Afghanistan, combating illicit drug trafficking, ensuring respect for human rights, implementing judicial

sector reform, establishing the basis for a sound economy and reconstructing productive capacity and infrastructure;<sup>55</sup>

It was not until his most recent report to the General Assembly, that the Secretary-General could even illuminate real progress in lead nation efforts in training the Afghan police.

The German-led police training programme is proceeding well. A new group of 500-600 trainee officers have been recruited and their training will begin in March 2003. The United States is also prepared to supplement Germany's efforts with a programme to provide basic training for thousands of police officers over the coming months. The Interior Minister is working on a draft presidential decree that would set out the course of police reform, much as the 1 December decree did for the army.<sup>56</sup>

Not only is this not assisting the present security and law enforcement needs, but unless the Germans can produce sufficient numbers of trained policemen, the long-term goals of achieving open and fair elections may be in jeopardy. Without a timeline laid out in the Bonn Agreement for the fielding of trained police forces, any timeline for open and free elections are a wish and not a plan. Without serious law enforcement in place, it is likely, given the nature of the Afghan warlords, and what we've observed thus far that they will do all in their power to coerce the people into voting or not voting for the benefit of the warlords and not the people.

## **CONCLUSION:**

The overall approach taken by the UN in Afghanistan with specific regard to planning the security requirements for the mission do not appear to be substantially improved over how the UN has always done business. Despite having over ten years of experience in complex peacekeeping operations and having the opportunity to benefit from the Brahimi Report's recommendations based off that experience, the results of my analysis indicate that the UN still plans and operates on a very ad hoc basis. The conditions for operational and tactical success in Afghanistan, based on the tenuous security strategy that is still established through a very political and convoluted process, do not seem to be likely. Given this analysis and a performance history that runs the gamut from utter failure in Somalia to equivocal successes like Bosnia and East Timor, this does not bode well for this organization's effectively planning and managing future POs.



The groundwork has been laid and the framework for building successful peace operations is available through judicious application of the recommendations made by the Panel on Peace Operations. The UN and the International Community as a whole must work harder to make the UN peace operations capabilities effective. Failure to do so will only serve to undermine what credibility the UN still retains and frustrate donor nations.

WORD COUNT = 7468

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